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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

In Today's Papers

EU Report Praises Turkey's Kurd, Armenian Moves
Media outlets report the EU Commission's annual enlargement report to be made public October 14 praises the government's 'Kurdish democratic initiative' and the dialogue with Armenia. Papers report EU sources expect Ankara to use the six-week period until the release of the report to take forward steps regarding the Kurdish question. A statement released by the EU term president Sweden has also welcomed Turkey and Armenia moving toward each other.

Papers report the EU report lauds a regulation for the trial of military officials by civilian courts; welcomes the launch eight months ago of Kurdish-language TV broadcasts on state-owned TRT-6 television; supports the Kurdish democratic initiative process; and mentions briefly Turkey's Armenia move. The EU report, however, slams Turkey over the ruling party exerting pressure on the media, over the fact that ties between the military and civilians were far from the EU standards, that Turkey has not opened its ports to Greek Cypriot vessels, and that the Halki Seminary has not been opened yet.

Rehn Welcomes Turkish Government's Kurdish Move
Papers report the EU Commissioner for enlargement, Olli Rehn, said the Turkish government's Kurdish move topped the list of important issues going on in Turkey. Rehn expressed pleasure over the move, but stressed the EU expected concrete action from the government. Rehn said the EU had to see whether the Turkish government could offer an initiative to the southeast that would bring economic and social development as well as expand language and cultural rights.

Reactions to Armenian Protocol
Sabah, Milliyet, Vatan, Radikal, Yeni Safak, Haber Turk and others: Mainstream Milliyet reports that, commenting on Turkish protocol for normalization of ties with Armenia at his party group meeting, main opposition party CHP leader Deniz Baykal said his party will not support the protocols between Turkey and Armenia until Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani territory is over. Mainstreams Hurriyet and HaberTurk report that deputy chairman of the MHP Oktay Vural and Mehmet Sandir said that PM Erdogan might be nominated for a Nobel

prize by the Western countries for supporting their projects like Kurdish opening and Armenian opening. Democrat Party chair Husamettin Cindoruk, on the other hand, claimed that the Armenian initiative is an initiative that was directed by President Obama during his speech at the Turkish Parliament. Liberal Radikal reports that the EU, in Turkey's progress report praised a series of reform steps. Milliyet reports that EU enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn delivered a speech in European Parliament's Commission for Human Rights yesterday. Rehn praised the protocol initialed by Turkey and Armenia and described the protocol as very important sign of improvement.

Editorial Opinions on Turkey-Armenia

Oktay Eksi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The government describes its goal of zero problems with neighbors which calls for a miracle to happen for any government in any given country. One wonders how this miracle will occur for Turkish-Armenian relations and how to convince Baku especially after pronouncing the Karabakh issue as a condition for normalization."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "Normalization with Armenia will facilitate a better relationship and cooperation model in the Caucasus. Turkey will be a key regional player on bilateral grounds as well as be a facilitator between Europe and the Caucasus region."

Kadri Gursel wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "This is the time to talk about realities as opposed to fantasies. The Karabakh issue is the name of a domestic political power game between the ruling party and

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the opposition in Baku. Therefore it is hard to expect Baku to be happy about Turkey-Armenia rapprochement without seeing a solution on Karabakh. However Turkish diplomacy should be working on convincing Baku on the bare realities. Working on a settlement for Karabakh is one thing, but on the other hand going back to the 1992 conditions, i.e. status quo ante, is not possible at all."

Cem Sey wrote in leftist Taraf: "Ankara made a brave decision by proceeding on the Armenia normalization process, and took a big risk. There is no chance for Ankara to push for settlement on Karabakh on either sides. Unless the Western powers, the U.S. and EU, keep up their promise and impose a solution that is acceptable for both Baku and Yerevan, the Turkey-Armenia process cannot go anywhere."

At White House Iftar, Obama Praises Islam and Religious Freedom
Obama's Iftar plays well for Muslim outreach, while his comments regarding religious dress draw attention from the staunchly secular and the Islamist-oriented outlets. Liberal Radikal headlines, "Obama Praises Islam at The Iftar." Mainstream Sabah notes, "Obama showered praise on Islam," as "he drew attention to the level of Muslims' participation in the U.S." Mainstream Hurriyet reports in "Obama's Turban Opening," that U.S. President Barack Obama said an Arab-born student in Oklahoma served as "an example" by suing her university for the right to wear the hijab at school. Islamist-oriented Zaman headlines, "Obama Praised the Headscarf Struggle," and notes, "Obama emphasized that tolerance is a value in the United States."

Scandal at the U.S. Embassy Amid An Intensifying War in Afghanistan

Media note that the latest U.S. security firm scandal has hit the U.S. Embassy in Kabul at a most inconvenient time. Mainstream Hurriyet reports, "As the attacks intensify against NATO forces from Taliban extremists, allegations of hazing have emerged at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul." Mainstream Sabah reports in "Scandal at the U.S. Embassy," that "a private security firm named ArmorGroup engaged in sexual abuse and maltreatment of its employees" at a time when, "The war in Afghanistan is worsening and the headquarters of the U.S. Mission is in trouble," due to this scandal. Sabah also says "It wasn't as bad as Abu Ghraib," but, "The State Department is investigating the allegations."

Domestic

- On Thursday, PM Erdogan will hold a terror summit with the participation of TGS Chief General Basbug, force commanders and some cabinet ministers to discuss the Kurdish "democratic initiative."
- President Abdullah Gul has hosted a Ramadan fast breaking dinner for the representatives of labor unions.
- South Korean steel giant POSCO and China's third biggest automotive manufacturer Dong Feng Motor chose Turkey as their production bases.
- As of Thursday, Turkish Airlines (THY) will begin its flights from Istanbul to Jakarta, Indonesia five times a week.

World

- Egyptian Foreign Minister Abou Gheit told a Cairo press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu that Turkey was playing an important role as a bridge between the Islamic world and the EU.
- The first meeting of the second round of Cyprus negotiations, which was scheduled to take place Thursday, has been postponed by

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the Greek Cypriot side due to Wednesday's dispute at the border when Greek Orthodox pilgrims were not permitted passage.

- Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis calls a snap national election, saying he needs a fresh mandate to deal with the economic crisis.
- Israeli and Palestinian ministers meet in Jerusalem for the first time after the appointment of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli Prime Minister.

JEFFREY